



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies

Adoption and Permanency Education Month Reflections

Adoption and Permanency Education Month takes place in November, and it is an opportunity to reflect on permanency for Ontario children, youth, families, and communities, as well as trends in child welfare.

The primary goal of child welfare agencies is to promote safety for children and youth in their families and communities. When it is not possible for children and youth to stay with their primary caregivers, child welfare agencies look to their families and communities for planning and placement options. Collaborative planning that engages and reflects the voices of children, youth, families, and communities is essential. Young people's identity, their sense of belonging, and their overall well-being and best outcomes are supported through continuity of connections. Permanency is not only about the type of placement, but about the connections and relationships that sustain and support children and youth throughout their lives.

Over the last five years, child welfare data on out-of-home care shows:

- The proportion of children and youth in out-of-home care living with people they know (kinship service, customary care, and kinship care) increased from 36% to 45%.
- The number of children and youth in foster care decreased by 42%.
- The number of adoptions and legal custody agreements steadily decreased over 5 years.¹

These trends fit with the goal of [child welfare redesign](#), improved focus on [family search and engagement and kinship](#), the child welfare sector's [9 Reconciliation Commitments](#), the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#), legislative obligations including [An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#), and [One Vision One Voice Race Equity Practices](#). Ontario strives for culturally informed permanency planning that centres identities from the onset, and considers history and the impacts of colonialism, systemic bias,

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and racism. Click [here](#) for a more complete picture of Ontario's out-of-home placement data and sector trends.

While the overall number of Ontario adoptions is decreasing, children and youth continue to be adopted by kin or others they know, or when those options are not available, through a matching process with adoptive applicants. Ontario is recruiting new, diverse caregivers and adoptive parents to reflect the needs of children and youth, including ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, and identity considerations. Children and youth who require a matching process are often older, part of a sibling group, have experienced trauma, and may have complex needs. Adoptive parents, through openness, can facilitate ongoing connections with primary families and communities.

For more resources about permanency in child welfare, visit our library guide [here](#). For more about how the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, through child welfare redesign, is prioritizing stability and permanency for children and youth across the province, click [here](#). To learn more about the adoption process in Ontario, visit the Centralized Adoption Intake Service via the Adoption Council of Ontario at www.adoption.on.ca.

ⁱ Data from the Q4 2022-23 Child Welfare Transfer Payment Supplementary Report of 38 non-Indigenous child welfare agencies. Please note: This data does not include data from Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies as there are no OCAP principle agreements in place. It should be noted however, that aggregate results from non-Indigenous agencies does include FNIM children and youth, as mandated by MCCSS agreements.

